Rod Gould
Board Chair, Institute for Local Government
Former City Manager, City of Santa Monica

Why did you enter public service?

Quite simply, the central notion behind the Athenian Oath, which is essentially to “leave it better than we found it.”

What do you love about local government?

More than any other profession I know, in local government you have the chance to make a significant positive difference in thousands of people's lives every single day.

What are the biggest challenges local government will face in the coming months? What are the biggest opportunities?

Recovering and improving after the COVID-19 pandemic is an historic challenge that cannot be overstated.

The opportunity before us is to get reforms in place as we emerge from the crisis. We can enhance health care availability, better prepare for the next pandemic, improve social cohesion, prioritize civic engagement, expand housing availability and homeless services, enact aggressive climate change legislation, and focus on mitigating the profound effects of income inequality in the Golden State.

Why do you volunteer your time as a board member for ILG?

ILG is purely committed to serving local government in California and has been for 65 years. I truly believe in the work we’re doing as a non-profit. The four pillars focus attention on creating better, more effective local government, by involving those who are served and governed with an eye to preserving the planet and educating people -- especially the next generation -- about the roles local governments play in their lives.

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Note: Rod Gould’s profile was featured in ILG’s April 2020 Newsletter.